

Martial Arts Program

Discussion

CMC directed, in July 2000, the development and implementation of a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. The program goals are to improve warfighting capabilities of individual Marines and units, enhance Marines' self-confidence and esprit de corps, and to further cultivate a warrior ethos in the Corps. This program will heighten the personal development of each Marine in a team framework, using a standardized, trainable, and sustainable close combat system. This design will enhance Marines' minds, bodies, and spirits thereby substantially improving overall unit combat readiness throughout the total force.

Marine Corps Martial Arts is distinctively a weapons-based system, integrating combat equipment, physical challenges and tactics typically found in the combat arena. This comprehensive program not only imparts traditional fighting skills and techniques, but is inextricably linked to and derives its strength from core values. It will reinforce the fabric of the Corps' high moral principles as it equips each Marine of the total force. A Marine will receive this training throughout his/her career, and may advance through a system of belt rankings from tan belt through sixth degree black belt. The belts are worn with the utility uniform. The belt system is comparable to other martial arts only in that it's a graded progression from basic to advanced skills in fighting techniques.

What makes this system unique is the requirement for the Marine to display equal mastery of the mental and character disciplines; belt progression is as follows:

Tan	Basic fundamentals of the mental, physical and character disciplines.
Grey	Introduction to intermediate fundamentals of each discipline.
Green	Intermediate fundamentals of each discipline.
Brown	Introduction to advance fundamentals of each discipline.
Black	Advanced fundamentals.

In addition to displaying proficiency in the mental, physical, and character disciplines, promotion to each belt level has rank, time in grade, age, PME requirements, as well as, the Marine's senior leader's recommendation.

Marine Corps Position

This total force strategy embraces an aggressive implementation plan that began in earnest during October 2000. Martial Arts Mobile Training Teams were launched from TBS (The Martial Arts Program Training Center) certifying instructors at the MCRDs, SOIs, and all three MEFs. Martial Arts training has been incorporated into the MCRD and The Basic School training schedules. Contracts for training equipment sets and rigger belts were let effecting immediate delivery to support Martial Arts training at entry-level and infantry organizations. All remaining forces will be completely outfitted by the end of FY02. The first Martial Arts Instructor Trainer course graduated at TBS in February 2001 with students attending from throughout the operating forces to include the Reserves.

Given the political and military strategic global challenges, Martial Arts Training will prove to be a force multiplier within the Corps, not just at the point of impact but also at the elemental level. Marines, steeped in the combined arms tradition and hardened with martial discipline, will stand for the highest attainment of core values, and will continue to bring the Corps success no matter the challenge, no matter the environment.

